

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, August 21, 1904, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C. B. Sunday, August 21, 1904. Dear little heart:

Where are you now I wonder and what are you doing? The house seems very empty here though only you are missing. Come home soon — and yet not too soon to have a nice time in Bethlehem with your mother. I wish you could induce her to come too when you return. My heart goes out to her and I fear she does not know it. I suppose Daisy has written to you and has lots to say — while I can't think of anything to tell you that will interest you. My thoughts and my experiments absorb me — and every day matters pass me by.

My only way to write at all — is to write hastily without picking my words — and let things come out as they may. If I once start rewriting a word — I'm afraid this letter will go into the waste-basket — so I will just scribble a few words — though I haven't anything to say — and you will at all events be able to read between the lines that your old husband loves you and thinks of you sometimes.

Daisy wants information concerning Political Economy and I have been ransacking the house for books upon the subject. I have found a number but not the one I want — Adam Smith's “Wealth of Nations”. I have two copies but I fear they are both in Washington. Perhaps you could pick up a copy in Portland. I suppose Bethlehem is too small a place for you to hope to find a copy there.

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I am very proud of Daisy's attempt to promote Home Industries here — and am inclined to think that she has started a movement that will grow into something of importance to

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the people here. She and Miss Taylor have gone into the matter together — and on July 20th, quietly opened the W. E. in Gertrude Hall. They are not quite sure what W. E. means — but don't care so much about the name as the substance. It is either the Woman's Exchange" or "Work Exchange" — although neither name is satisfactory.

They have prevailed upon some of the people here to put into the hands of Miss Taylor — some of their home work for sale. The people name their own price and Miss Taylor puts on 10% as commission. If the things are sold Miss Taylor pays the makers the price they asked, retaining the commission, and if they are not sold she simply returns the articles. This is a simple plan and does well for a beginning.

Between July 20th and August 20th, Miss Taylor has received articles valued at \$69.50 and has sold articles to the amount of \$20.40. Maggie's sister received \$10.00 cash for some of her things — towels, rugs and etc., and is much encouraged. It is more money, I believe, than she has ever before received at one time! People are beginning to hear about the W. E. — and every few days people are bringing things to Gertrude Hall to be sold. The visitors at the hotels also are learning about the Exchange — and visit Gertrude Hall to look over the collection. The chief 3 articles sold come under the head of woolen and cotton woven and worked. Next comes home made cake and candy.

My father sat up in his chair for two hours today — and is making steady but slow improvement.

I slept on Daisy's verandah last night until I was awakened by rain upon my face. Retreated just in time to escape a storm. Gardiner was out in it all night in his boat with no other shelter than a sail. He and Clarke McCurdy were together at Norton's Cove. They turned up today all right — but looking like drowned rats. Elsie and Bert have not yet returned. They went to Port Bevis in the Alexander.

My father has been amusing himself with Mrs. Davidson's cat and her three kittens.

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The squirrel that makes her home at the laboratory or near there — brought five baby squirrels into the Annex the other day — one after the other — and has left them there to our charge. They seem quite tame — and play among the kites all day — and the men share their lunches with them.

Melville and Gertrude both well — at least we don't hear anything from them at night. In the day-time I hear frequent calls for “ Pa Aleeck ” from Melville — and the “three blind mice” are in great requisition.

And now my dear little wife good night — with much love to your mother.

Your own, Alec. Mrs. A. G. Bell, Bethlehem, N. H.